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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/788,771	02/27/2004	Pieter G. Wybro	MOD013/145573	8450

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ANDREWS & KURTH, L.L.P.
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HOUSTON, TX 77002

EXAMINER

SWINEHART, EDWIN L

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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3617

MAIL DATE	DELIVERY MODE
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12/04/2007

PAPER

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/788,771

Applicant(s)

WYBRO ET AL.

Examiner

Ed Swinehart

Art Unit

3617

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 30 October 2007.

2a) ☐ This action is FINAL.

2b) ☒ This action is non-final.

3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-7,9,10,12,14,16,23,25,30-32,36 and 45-54 is/are pending in the application.

4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.

5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.

6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-7,9,10,12,14,16,23,25,30-32,36 and 45-54 is/are rejected.

7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.

8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.

10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.

Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).

Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).

11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).

a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:

1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.

2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.

3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)

2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)

3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____

4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____

5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application

6) ☐ Other: _____

DETAILED ACTION

1. A request for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, including the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e), was filed in this application after final rejection. Since this application is eligible for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, and the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e) has been timely paid, the finality of the previous Office action has been withdrawn pursuant to 37 CFR 1.114. Applicant's submission filed on 10/30/2007 has been entered.
2. The drawings are objected to under 37 CFR 1.83(a). The drawings must show every feature of the invention specified in the claims. Therefore, the passive spring riser tensioner must be shown or the feature(s) canceled from the claim(s). No new matter should be entered.

Corrected drawing sheets in compliance with 37 CFR 1.121(d) are required in reply to the Office action to avoid abandonment of the application. Any amended replacement drawing sheet should include all of the figures appearing on the immediate prior version of the sheet, even if only one figure is being amended. The figure or figure number of an amended drawing should not be labeled as "amended." If a drawing figure is to be canceled, the appropriate figure must be removed from the replacement sheet, and where necessary, the remaining figures must be renumbered and appropriate changes made to the brief description of the several views of the drawings for consistency. Additional replacement sheets may be necessary to show the renumbering of the remaining figures. Each drawing sheet submitted after the filing date of an application must be labeled in the top margin as either "Replacement Sheet" or "New

Sheet" pursuant to 37 CFR 1.121(d). If the changes are not accepted by the examiner, the applicant will be notified and informed of any required corrective action in the next Office action. The objection to the drawings will not be held in abeyance.

3. The proposed replacement sheet of drawings filed 10/30/2007 has not been approved by the examiner, as such is considered to be New Matter. There is no basis in the disclosure as originally filed for the element in the figure to now be called the passive riser tensioner.

4. The following is a quotation of the first paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall contain a written description of the invention, and of the manner and process of making and using it, in such full, clear, concise, and exact terms as to enable any person skilled in the art to which it pertains, or with which it is most nearly connected, to make and use the same and shall set forth the best mode contemplated by the inventor of carrying out his invention.

5. Claims 1-7,9,10,12,14,16,23,25,30-32,36, and 45-54 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, first paragraph, as failing to comply with the written description requirement. The claim(s) contains subject matter which was not described in the specification in such a way as to reasonably convey to one skilled in the relevant art that the inventor(s), at the time the application was filed, had possession of the claimed invention. The passive riser tensioner as claimed is not understood. Applicant claims such as a spring, yet has failed to disclose how a spring performs such a task. Where is the spring, and how does it support the riser upper end?

6. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

7. Claims 1-7,9,10,12,14,16 and 51 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Davies et al. '250 in view of White et al '148 and Scozzafava.

Davies et al. discloses the field of the invention, including a tension leg platform with moon pool and with underwater hull(s) and above water deck supported by a column (a plurality of columns are not required, as such as recited are apparatus limitations, carrying no weight in these method claims). A plurality of tendon porches are provided about the lower hull, which carries a plurality of mooring tendons as claimed. Davies fails to disclose how risers are tensioned and supported from the platform, nor the equipment used to handle the risers.

White et al. discloses a column supporting a deck above a submerged hull. Risers, connected in fluid communication with a subsea well, are suspended at 9, such suspension inherently placing the riser in tension (therefore 9 are "tensioners" as claimed). The risers are laterally supported at a second elevation below the suspension point, at either inwardly or outwardly facing parts of the hull (note figures 6 and 8). Such risers have side entry to the guides.

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to support the risers/tubular material handling members of Davies et al. within the moonpool as taught by White et al. The method is inherent to the apparatus.

Such a combination would have been desirable so as to provide for the efficient handling of the tubular members.

Scozzafava teaches a riser handling system employing a passive heave compensation system.

It would further have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to employ a passive heave compensator to initially handle the risers of Davies as taught by Scozzafava.

Such a combination would have been desirable so as to provide compensated of the risers as they are being handled, such as when initially deployed, and during maintenance.

8. Claims 23,25,30,31,32,36 and 45-54 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Huang et al. in view of Petersen and Scozzafava.

Huang discloses the field of the invention, including a plurality of columns residing between deck and lower hull. Tendon porches are provided about the lower hull as claimed. Huang does not show the orientation of the mooring tendons, but the vertical orientation of the tendons in such a tension-leg platform is inherency. Huang fails to disclose the exact manner in which the conventional top-end tensioned risers are accommodated within the moon pool.

Petersen teaches the handling of risers within a moon pool. The risers are moved laterally into bearing assemblies which provide a generally cylindrical passage therethrough which borders an exterior surface of the hull. Tensioners are provided above deck to tension and move the risers.

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to provide a riser handling/bearing arrangement about the inner periphery of the moon pool of Huang et al. as taught by Petersen.

Such a combination would have been desirable so as to provide for ease and efficiency in handling the risers.

Re claim 36, such fails to define over the closed periphery of the moon pool itself, which is an aperture as claimed.

Re claim 45, downward facing is outward.

Scozzafava is applied as above.

Re spring, since the compensator of Scozzafava acts like a spring, such may be called a spring.

9. Applicant's arguments with respect to the claims have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection.

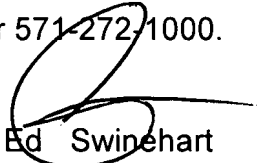
10. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Ed Swinehart whose telephone number is 571-272-6688. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday through Thursday 6:30 am to 2:00 pm..

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Samuel Morano can be reached on 571-272-6684. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Application/Control Number:
10/788,771
Art Unit: 3617

Page 7

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.



Ed Swinehart
Primary Examiner
Art Unit 3617

REPLACEMENT SHEET

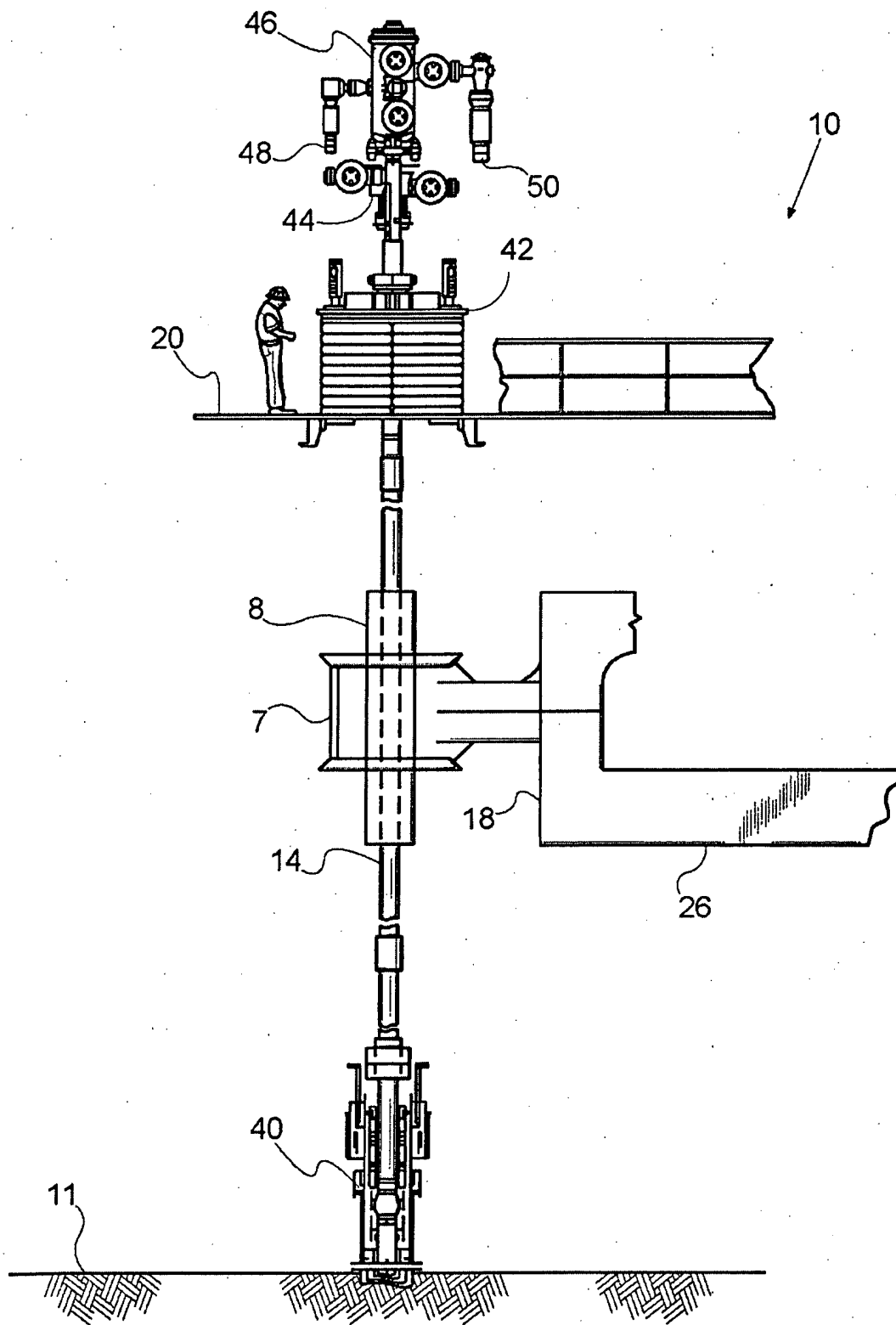


Fig. 10

Not Approved See 11/24/07